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000 The time it was possible to devote to the research, the writing, and the revision has been under two years. I can claim, however, that the application has been intensive.

A survey of this sort accomplished in so short a time had obviously to be in the nature of a *tour de force*. I had, for the most part, to rely on secondary sources and, as was to be expected, there were many gaps in my information. At the best, the impressionism promised to be an imperfect mosaic with some cracked tesserae and blanks ~~in the~~ pattern filled in with the cement of speculation. The information available, too, varied considerably with the countries. However, I hoped to compensate for the limitations of my method as far as possible by obtaining the help of experts in the several countries and fields of knowledge through criticism of the work section by section before publication. This hope proved well founded, for through the good offices of Chatham House and the International Secretariat of the Institute of Pacific Relations, and by exploiting my personal friendships, I was able to appeal with success to a number of experts in Great Britain, the United States, the Netherlands, France, Canada, South Africa, and the Far East to scrutinize my first drafts, and to supply some of my deficiencies. The comments and suggestions received were of the highest value. I was relieved to find that, on the whole, the essential structure of my individual studies was not undermined by errors in detail. In two cases, indeed, I had courted disaster by trespassing on ground with which I was acquainted only in the most general and imperfect way, but here I was rescued by timely criticism and advice. (A number of my mistakes proved to be derived from the secondary authorities on which I had relied, and I had in some instances to make a choice when these authorities were in conflict.) I have considered carefully every suggestion received, and in the majority of cases have amended my text in the light of the comments made. When, as infrequently happened, my advisers differed, I had also to make a choice between them or to steer a middle course. If errors remain, they are my own.

000 The brain of the historian (says Edouard Chavannes) is a prism through which are refracted the luminous rays that are the facts; and (he adds) what is important to the reader is to determine the index of refraction of this prism. The above personal details, together with the unconscious self-betrayal of the text, should help the reader in this task.

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I am most grateful to those who have assisted me in this way, and I am flattered that persons of eminence should have considered my text worth the trouble they have bestowed upon it. My thanks are due to Mr B. R. Pearn for reading the entire work, and to the following who read one or more parts of it—Mrs Patricia Barnett, Sir Paul Butler, Mr Chu-pei Chen, Mr Richard Couglin, Mr F. S. V. Donnison, Miss Cora Du Bois, Professor J. J. L. Duyvendak, Professor Raymond Firth, Mr Tom Harrisson, Mr J. D. Higham, Sir Robert Holland, Mr A. F. P. Hulsewé, Mr N. R. Jarrett, Mr George McT. Kahin, Mr Paul Kattenburg, Professor Raymond Kennedy, Professor R. D. Kollewijn, Dr K. P. Landon, M. Roger Lévy, Sir Raibeart MacDougall, Mr J. V. Mills, Mr R. S. Milward, Mr O. H. Morris, Professor Karl Pelzer, Miss Catherine Porter, Mr Ifor B. Powell, Mr W. A. C. Smelt, Sir Robert Smith, Mr R. T. Tan, Professor Arnold Toynbee, Dr B. M. Vlekke, and Mr W. A. Ward. I am indebted also to Mr R. A. D. Forrest, lecturer in Tibeto-Burman languages in the University of London, for writing an appendix on the dialects of South China especially for this work, to Dr Janus Poppe for considerable help with Dutch texts, to Miss A. C. J. Willems of the Netherlands Information Bureau in London for assistance of a similar kind, and to Mr Leonard Unger and the American Geographical Society for permission to reproduce the map showing the distribution of Chinese in Southeast Asia. I have also to thank Mr Richard Adloff, Dr Virginia Thompson Adloff, Mr Leonard Aurousseau, Professor C. R. Boxer, Mr R. S. Busuego, Mr H. M. Cheng, Mr I. C. Cheng, Mr J. S. Furnivall, Miss Ellen Hammer, Mr Edwin Haward, Mr Cecil Hobbs, Dr Arthur Hummel, Mr G. W. Irwin, Mr Loke Wan-tho, Mr J. N. McHugh, Sir Frederick Maze, Dr Lennox Mills, Dr Th. Moll, Mr A. S. B. Olver, Mr E. Osborn, Mr H. T. Pagden, Mr L. N. Palar, Mr Harry Price, Mr Tan Cheng-lock, Mr Tan Siew-sin, Mr G. G. Thomson, Dr Tjoa Sik-ien, Mr M. V. del Tufo, Dr H. van der Valk, Dr Wabeke, Sir Richard Winstedt, and Mr Guy Wint for assistance of several kinds. My indebtedness to libraries is, of course, great, and in particular I would mention the courtesy and help I received from the staffs of the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, Washington, the British Museum Reading Room, and the respective libraries of the Institute of Pacific Relations, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Royal Asiatic Society, the Middle Temple,

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and the Colonial Office, and, notably, from Miss Barbara Kyle, librarian of Chatham House, and her staff who seemed never at a loss to produce the most out-of-the-way books and periodicals, and from Miss K. M. L. Simpson, press librarian of Chatham House, whose staff were unfailing in providing cuttings on all sorts of subjects and at the shortest notice. The entire work has been edited by Mrs Dorothy A. Cannell with a care that has increased its precision and improved the diction.

Finally I should thank Miss Margaret Cleeve, the Research Secretary of Chatham House, and Mr W. L. Holland, the Secretary General of the International Secretariat of the Institute of Pacific Relations, for their invaluable assistance. Without them and the machinery of their institutions I should have been unable to solicit the help of the above-mentioned experts and the project would have been stillborn.[1]

In order to bring the survey as up to date as possible, a Postscript is added, written in the course of a visit to all the countries of Southeast Asia in the second half of 1950. This visit was made possible by a grant for the purpose from the Rockefeller Foundation to the Institute of Pacific Relations.

August 1950

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[1] Since the main object of this study is to throw light on contemporary happenings, more attention has been paid to the history of the past two or three hundred years than to the earlier Chinese contacts with Southeast Asia. Indeed, as in my work on the Chinese in Malaya, interest in the Chinese begins in earnest from the time when they formed more or less settled communities in the region, and minor account is taken of trading voyages or isolated travellers.

The story is brought up to the moment of writing, which differs, of course, in the several parts. The section on Indonesia, for example, stops just before the second Dutch 'police action'; for Malaya the narrative is taken to February 1949.

That the authorities are mostly European rather than Chinese is due to the fact that the analytic and descriptive habit is of only recent growth among the Chinese of Southeast Asia.